

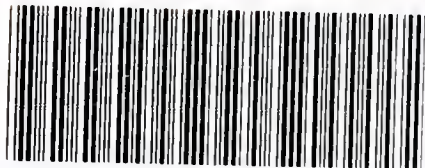
E 664

.H73 G8

Copy 2

GARRET AUGUSTUS HOBART

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 001 718 758 2

ADDRESS

OF

Honorable JOHN W. GRIGGS

11

AT THE

UNVEILING OF THE STATUE

OF

GARRET AUGUSTUS HOBART

LATE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

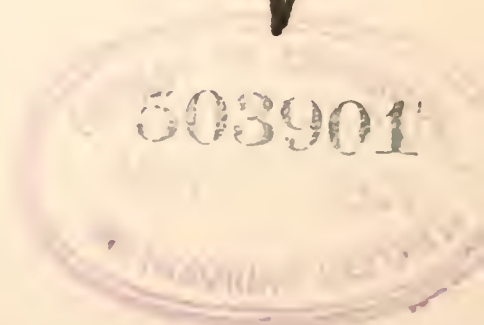
AT

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

June 3, 1903



503901



E 664

.47368

2.742



FOR OUR dead friend whose statue is to-day set up we have had our period of mourning. The untimeliness of his death, the personal bereavement which so deeply affected his friends and fellow citizens, will never cease to be felt in the deepest regions of our human affections. A light has gone out of our lives, and the gloom it left will never be dispelled. But the requiem has been sung: his mortal body slumbers in ground while the spirit has returned to God who gave it. With the world remain now his fame and the record of worthiness he made in his all-too-brief career. He has passed into history. The sentiments of personal admiration, of affection, and of grief which affect his friends and neighbors are ephemeral; they will pass away when we pass away. His character and service to his country will never pass away. They will go down from generation to generation. The form and the lineaments outlined in this figure of enduring bronze will tell posterity what manner of man Garret A. Hobart appeared to be. The testimony of his contemporaries, the record of his successful life, will show the transcendency of his talents, and justify the fond pride with which his friends have placed his statue in this public place and challenged the world to say whether he was worthy of the distinction.

The career of Vice-President Hobart was passed in an exacting and a self-asserting age. That he found successful access to its confidence, won its trust, and bore away with him its universal grief, show that he possessed not only ability of the

highest order, but also a character and temperament so compounded of courage and loyalty, of tact and sagacity, as to approach nigh to the definition of genius.

I think we may safely set it down that in his progress through life, from the bottom to the top of the ladder, he owed nothing to chance. His career was a logical process of development where every honor that came was but a just recognition of qualification and merit, and in no way a distinction won as a reward of ambitious struggling for prominence. He was not one—

“ Who grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance.”

He possessed great influence over the minds of other men ; but it did not come from self assertion or the domination of a strong will demanding recognition of himself. It did not come from the cultivation of the arts of popularity. He was not fond of standing in the public eye. His modesty was great and sincere. His estimate of his own merit and ability was far below that which his friends had of him. He did not seek popularity by those methods which usually evoke the applause and admiration of the multitude. He was not spectacular. He never tried to thrust himself into prominence. The secret of his great success, both in private and public affairs, was in the facility with which he did things. He was best known and most appreciated by the men with whom he came in contact in practical work, either in business or politics.

Mr. Hobart was self-reliant, but not self-assertive. He was content to do the thing in hand, and leave others to talk about it or claim credit for it. His mind was eminently practical. He never troubled himself about doctrines or theories, but combining and assimilating all that was wise and practical, with the illuminating brilliancy of his clear intellect he applied it to the subject in hand and reduced it to the elements of practical common sense.

He never lectured or preached; he wrought. How helpful he was in council, how sagacious in advice, how clear his insight, how fertile his resources, how accurate his judgment, let those who have happily felt the inspiration of his genius testify.

Towards public questions his attitude was reposeful and conservative. Restless eagerness for agitation and change was foreign to his nature. Notoriety was not agreeable to his modest ways. He was no knight-errant roaming abroad in quest of combats. In a quiet and unostentatious spirit he met the work and the problems of the day as they arose in his pathway and swiftly solved them with a supreme and masterful intelligence—and with unerring accuracy.

He long served as the Chairman of the Republican State Committee of New Jersey. For many years he was the representative of his State upon the National Republican Committee. There could be no higher testimony to his great ability and his unselfish nature than the profound respect and the personal affection which he acquired among his asso-

ciates in this service. They knew his work and his worth—they saw what was in him, they gauged his capacity and his fitness for great service. And when in 1896 a candidate for the Vice-Presidency was wanted who would embody the sound conservative spirit of the country and ensure, in case of the President's death, a Chief Magistrate whose character and capacity, whose tactfulness and wisdom, would measure up to the standard of William McKinley, these political co-workers of Mr. Hobart, representing every section of the country, were the ones who gave shape and direction to the demand of his New Jersey friends and made him the unanimous nominee of his party.

The honor was by him not only wholly unsought, but almost undesired. But it was the result of the same causes which all through his life had led men to choose him for the leader of their councils—a firm and undoubting faith in the superiority of his talent for service.

And now, in a wider field, and before the eyes of a greater multitude than he had ever faced, before the remainder of his work was to be accomplished.

How well he bore the test—how with the spread of his name spread also his fame for great qualities of mind and administrative capacity—is known to all the world, and this statue is intended to preserve and perpetuate the appreciation of his grateful countrymen for his service to his Government.

Though he had a large acquaintance with the leading men of his party, he was not, when he took the oath of office of Vice-President, widely known to the country. He had always been diffident about

putting himself, so to speak, in the public eye. He was not a political orator. He helped others to become presidents of the great political conventions of his party while he stood modestly in the background; so his powers were fully known only to the fortunate ones who worked with him in the practical councils of the party. When he stood before the Senate to take the oath of office on the 4th of March, 1897, I suspect that a majority of the members of that august and unique body looked upon him as a novice who would in time, and with careful tutelage, attain to a proper appreciation of the dignity of the Senate and an understanding of its rules and traditions. I remember well the mild raising of Senatorial eyebrows, the looks of tolerating surprise, with which the Senators listened to the suggestions of his inaugural address that there should be some way found to end debate and reach a vote in that body. Their evident verdict was that the new Vice-President was just another like his predecessors—respectable, but inexperienced, destined to go through the mechanical labor of holding the gavel, but otherwise of no force or account in the councils of the Senate.

Yet in three months from that day there was not a Senator out of the whole ninety of them who was not ready to admit that, for facility and practical usefulness, the new Vice-President was something far greater than they had ever had the fortune to know before. They found in him one who knew all the rules and traditions as well as the best-informed, and much better than the most of them—one whose quickness of perception and clearness in the appli-

cation of rules to parliamentary conduct excelled them all ; whose mind grasped, and memory retained, the status of every motion and amendment ; so that an appeal to him for information was as good as an appeal to the record of the Senate. As he came to be known in Washington his influence and reputation grew rapidly. He was found by the active leaders in Congress to be a helpful man to appeal to ; and in a short time he became, next to the President, the man whose counsel in great affairs as well as small ones was oftenest sought and most surely followed.

There was none among the powerful and sagacious members of the Administration party, either in the House of Representatives, in the Senate, or in the Cabinet, whose wisdom, intelligence and experience were so universally called into requisition in the shaping of great policies and the formulation of important legislation.

More unusual even than this was the relation that arose between the Vice-President and President McKinley. Never intimately known to each other prior to their election upon the same ticket, they came at once upon their induction into office into such a mutual state of confidence and personal affection as to make them a great and beautiful exception to the ordinary formal relations maintained by these two officials towards each other.

The broad public experience of McKinley and his training in practical statemanship, were supplemented and perfected by the greater familiarity possessed by Mr. Hobart with the practical affairs of the business and political world, and by his sa-

gacious alertness, amounting almost to intuition. They respected, valued, loved one another. The President learned very early that in Mr. Hobart he had an associate of extraordinary quality, one who could help him and who would help him ; one who had no selfish or jealous views, but a broad, splendid spirit of friendliness, and an interest in the welfare and success of the Administration that was profound and unadulterated.

Mr. Hobart thus became the President's most intimate and trusted adviser. His views were sought upon every question of doubt or difficulty ; no man either in or out of the Government was so frequently or so fully consulted as to the conduct of the Administration.

The President and the Vice-President thus became coadjutors in the fixing of the policies of the Administration to an extent never before known. They had a mutual sympathy with each other, and a mutual regard so earnest and loyal and true as to cause men to marvel at it. The advantage to the President from this unique association was incalculable. It gave him the advantage of a potential representative in the legislative branch ; for it should be borne in mind that Mr. Hobart while possessing the President's confidence on the one hand, on the other was the intimate confidant and adviser of his political confrères in the Senate, and in this way brought together in unusual harmony and with unprecedented sympathy the wishes and views of the Executive and of his party in the Senate. The smooth and harmonious course of the McKinley Administration was thus largely due to

the rare combination which these two wise and tactful men formed through their mutual trust in one another. The tendencies of their minds were similar. They had no divergent theories, but both were equally endowed with that sound, conservative, moderate and conciliating temperament that wins at once the minds and hearts of other men. They saw things alike because they both looked at the world through normal eyes, with no mental enlargement or astigmatism, and things thus appeared in their natural order and proportions. Neither was under any enchantment as to the size of the world or his own relation to its affairs. Both bore themselves with a simple, unostentatious dignity that showed them to be ideal citizens of a great republic. Both are gone—gone untimely as our human judgments measure Fate's decrees. Had Mr. Hobart lived and his health remained, he would have been the President. How well he would have filled that great place, how his clear intelligence would have penetrated the difficult problems that beset the chief magistracy, how just and sane and tactful would have been his rule, needs not to be told to this generation who knew his great qualities of mind and heart. But future generations will know from the annals of that historic Administration, and this statue will perpetuate the truth, that in Garret Augustus Hobart our age reached its maximum in the development of sure intelligence, sound judgment, and sweetness of character.

To posterity we now commit his fame. There are about this familiar figure of our friend none of

the insignia of war that distinguish the monuments of great soldiers, none of the suggestive attitudes that mark the master of science or invention, none of the inscriptions that denote the man of art or literature. It is the form of a citizen of the Republic; one whose life was passed along the ordinary paths of preparation and progress, who used the ordinary means, in the ordinary way, but by supreme capacity, through pure and noble aspiration, rose to a height of fame and appreciation that will forever class him among the most splendid products of American citizenship.

